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stages of class A segmentation in very quick succession: first, the separation of the descendants of Ogweno's second wife Gaya from those of his first wife Nyariro; second, the separation of the descendants of Awuor—the wife of Ogembo inherited after his death by his younger brother Onyango Adhanja—from the descendants of Onyango Adhanja's own wives; third, the separation of the descendants of Omolo from those of his brother Mboya; finally, the separation of the descendants of Omolo's two wives Ochich and Ojwang'. During all this process Kanyariro grew so slowly that it failed to segment at all. Of course, each new stage of segmentation does not destroy the groupings of the last, but raises their operation to a higher level. The fact that Kochich and Kojwang' split apart to form new *gwenge* does not destroy Komolo as a *gweng'*, but rather gives it a new importance as it is then no longer a minimal *dhoot* but has its own subordinate *dhoudi*. So by an immense process of secular competitive elimination, certain households and homesteads of the past have given rise to *anjuola* segments which later achieved the status of *gweng'* and *dhoot*, and have finally been raised by successive stages of segmentation to their present level as maximal lineages.

But are the figures in these genealogies historical figures, and did these families really multiply and those stagnate, or are all the circumstantial details a *post facto* rationalization of structural relations in terms of a lineage ideology? It seems on balance an easier hypothesis to suppose that there is a genuine element of truth in recorded genealogies and in recollections of recent events; that the omissions from and additions to factual history increase with time depth, and in proportion to the strength of motives for distortion and to the lack of endorsement of recollections of group events by frequent recapitulation in various social activities and embodiment in the pattern of territorial settlement, rather than to regard them purely as a mirage reflecting certain functions of the contemporary social structure. Genealogy is not myth, though it may well, and for the Luo certainly does, bridge the gap between an actual present and a mythical past. It is unlikely that a people, whose memory is shown by indubitable checks to be good (e.g. in the recollections of the coming of individual Europeans to Luoland more than fifty years ago, and of other known historical events of the same period), are wholly inaccurate in what they say about their immediate ancestors' activities in founding *gwenge* and about the descent of *gweng'* members from a paternal grandmother or grandfather. And if this is accepted there is no reason to throw much more doubt on the accounts of earlier ancestors, up to five or six generations back, where these conform to what is evidently true of more recent times. At the remoter genealogical levels the need for caution is obvious, and the stories told of first ancestors twelve to fourteen generations back are of a mythical type easily distinguishable from the more historical accounts of events and persons nearer in time. The Luo of Karachuonyo frankly admit that they know much less about their ancestors before they crossed over Kavirondo Gulf to their present territory about seven generations ago. From this time onward they can give endless details of ancestral activity, for mnemonics are provided by the topography itself and their continuous association with it; but before the crossing they have little to say of their ancestors except for those eponyms who are still of structural importance and who are the focus of a rich body of myth. I have, therefore, approached the account of the most recent levels of the lineage structure on

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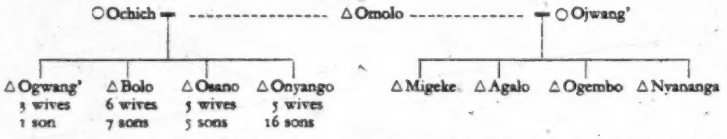
613 127 the assumption that it is likely to be correct, in proportion to the certainty with which it is given, the absence of deviant and contradictory versions, and its conformity with the probabilities established by a knowledge of the forces operative in contemporary family life and in the contemporary activity of lineage segments.

613 To return to the lineage of Komolo: the rapidity of its growth can be seen from the diagram below showing some of the immediate male agnatic descendants of Omolo. Both Omolo's wives produced four sons, and the families of all these multiplied. The sons of Ochich between them married nineteen wives and begot twenty-nine sons, all these latter themselves having issue. The sons of Ojwang' were also prolific, but I have no exact figures for their agnatic issue. Rweya, the present *jaduong' gweng'* of Kochich, is a younger son of Onyango the founder of the *gweng'*, and Bolo, the present *jaduong' gweng'* of Kojwang', is son of its founder Agalo. Rweya's father Onyango was also a very famous leader, acting as chief elder of all Karachuonyo.



The conditions of *gweng'* formation were here satisfied in the reproductive growth of Omolo's patrilineal descendants, the presence of leaders necessary for the new settlements, the suitable numerical size of the *gwenge* defined by the lines of agnatic fission, and the availability of *thim* for them to occupy.[1] The descendants of Omolo were quite numerous enough to form more than a single *gweng'*, and by dividing according to the segments of Omolo's two wives they formed two new *gwenge* each of suitable size. They could not, however, have divided into the segments of Omolo's sons, for this would have meant fission into too many major segments each of too small size. None of these, except perhaps Onyango's, would have been large enough to form a separate *gweng'*. It would have been very unusual for Onyango's lineage to form a *gweng'* while its co-ordinates were unable to do so, for these latter would refuse to join Onyango's *gweng'* and call themselves after him, and could only remain in the undivided *gweng'* of Omolo or else divide into *gwenge* called after his wives, as actually happened. It is practical questions of this sort that require some *dhoudi* to derive their agnatic structure from apical ancestors who were women, and to be called after them, and which give rise to the principle that one co-ordinate cannot split off from its superordinate lineage without the rest.[2] It is fruitless to argue that these ancestresses were merely the wives of agnatic forebears and not even members of the lineage in the strict sense. To any question as to why they are derived from and called after non-agnatic females the members of such a lineage simply say

[1] It appears that ten or a dozen homesteads, that is, ten or a dozen males having reached the status of compound family heads, giving a total population of about one hundred persons, may have been about the minimum size necessary for the founding of a new settlement. In the location of Gem in South Kavirondo there is a case of a *gweng'* founded only in 1924 which in 1947 had fifteen separate homesteads but which started with about ten.

[2] But if all but one of a group of co-ordinates dwindle into insignificance, the one co-ordinate of importance may be able to claim for itself the eponym of the lineage superordinate to them all, as in the case of the wives of Mboya; see above, p. 35.